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Atlanta City Hall  
68 Mitchell Street, S.W.  
Atlanta  
Fulton County  
Georgia

HABS No. GA-2166

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

Name: Atlanta City Hall

Location: 68 Mitchell Street, S.W., Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. City Hall is situated on a four acre city block bounded by Mitchell Street on the north, Central Avenue on the west, Washington Street on the east, Trinity Avenue on the south. The building, which faces Mitchell Street, is set back approximately 80 feet on that (N.) side, on a central line between Washington Street and Central Avenue.

Present Owner, Present Occupant, Present Use:

City of Atlanta  
Mayor's Suite, City Council Chambers, offices, meeting rooms

Significance: The Atlanta City Hall was designed by a prominent local architect, G. Lloyd Preacher. The materials used on the exterior and parts of the interior, marble, granite, brick and terra cotta were all Georgia products. Although several were planned, there are no other major structures in the city with such elaborate set-backs. The Depression halted construction of other structures of this type, making the design unique in this city. According to a 1929 article, this "towering structure" was a "symbol of Atlanta's growth as a metropolitan center".

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 9/29/28 - 2/22/30 (7/20/28 foundation)  
Building plans #824 and #833.  
An \$8,000,000 bond issue approved by the voters in 1926 included \$1,000,000 for a new city hall. It was completed for approximately \$1,250,000. Councilman Howard C. McCutcheon was chairman of the special city hall committee that supervised the project. All city records were moved to the new building on February 22, 1930. (Atlanta Journal, 2/22/30, pg. 1)
2. Architect: G. Lloyd Preacher  
He is listed as architect on the permit and plans. An article in the Atlanta Journal (4/5/25) pictures plans by architect A. Ten Eyck Brown. He is not the architect of City Hall, although he is given credit for the building in the A.I.A. Guide to Atlanta (1975). An interview with G. Lloyd Preacher (Atlanta Journal Magazine, 7/12/28) includes his drawing of the proposed city hall which corresponds to the structure that was built.

Geoffrey Lloyd Preacher: architect, engineer; b. Fairfax, South Carolina, May 11, 1882; Clemson College B.S., 1904; began practice in Augusta, Georgia, 1909; moved to Atlanta, 1922. Headed a large firm with offices in Atlanta and Florida. Buildings throughout the southeast.

3. Builder: National Construction Company, Inc., general contractors; H.G. Flemming and Co., foundation.
4. The exterior has not been altered. Early photographs at the Atlanta Historical Society include: #1423 (1930's aerial); #1722, 1930; #3919, C. 1930; #2508, 1947; numerous other photographs taken over the years.
5. Alterations and additions: There have been no alterations of the facade. Some of the terra cotta tile surfacing has peeled away and been replaced. Interior alterations consist mainly of fireproofing, renovation of office space, and partitioning office space to allow for additional personnel. The alterations are described in the attached building permits.

B. Historical Context:

On February 22, 1930, the City of Atlanta moved its records and offices to the new City Hall at 68 Mitchell Street. The structure has served as Atlanta's City Hall continuously from that date. The Office of the Mayor and the City Council Chambers occupy the building as well as various city departments. Important decisions regarding the City have been made here and well known political figures have worked in the building. Some of the most recent mayors were: William B. Hartsfield, who championed the open-schools policy and called upon the legislature to allow Atlanta to desegregate its schools without state intervention; Ivan Allen, Jr., who launched the "Forward Atlanta" program when he became mayor in 1961; and Maynard Jackson, the first black mayor of any southern city since reconstruction.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Description of Exterior:

Atlanta City Hall is composed of a set-back office tower of eleven stories above a three story rectangular base. Uninterrupted brick piers with inset spandrels of ornamented terra cotta produce a strong verticality in the building. City Hall may be entered from each of its four sides and from two levels, first and ground floors. Ground floor dimensions are 116x160 feet, the longer facade facing Mitchell Street. The main entrance fronts on Mitchell Street and faces downtown Atlanta. The base dimensions are reduced to an 82x54 foot tower which extends to the top, 15th, floor. A chimes tower was part of the original plan, however, the chimes were never installed; the space on the 15th floor is currently an observation tower. Wherever possible materials

available in Georgia were used in the construction. Plans outlined by architect G. Lloyd Preacher called for "reinforced concrete construction with a granite base and terra cotta superstructure". Cream colored terra cotta tiles cover the entire building with the exception of the vertical piers above the windows where an olive green terra cotta in an ornate design creates an interesting contrast. White Georgia marble is used on the balustrade and entrance on the Mitchell Street side.

B. Description of the Interior:

There is a partial basement for mechanical systems. The ground floor was designed to provide office space, record rooms and a "soda, cigar and sandwich shop", and to provide surface entrance for truck delivery from Central and Trinity. It is still used in much the same way. The first or "main" floor was designed in the manner of a grand banking hall, and was planned to house those departments having the most contact with the public: tax collection, license fees, water department, etc. The best bronze banking fixtures were used in these areas. The lobby, with its lofty, gilded ceiling and marble floor, was designed to give a feeling of impressive spaciousness. The lobby and other important public spaces have decorative marble wainscoting, walls and pillars of coquina marble from Brunswick, Georgia, and ornamental plaster cornices. The Mitchell Street entrance and the four elevators feature heavy, bronze doors; all fixtures in the lobby area are marble and bronze. Twin staircases, of rocepia marble mined at Tate, Georgia, located at either end of the central lobby, lead to the second floor. The second floor was designed to accommodate the Mayor's Suite, Council Chambers and committee rooms. The Mayor's Suite and the Council Chambers were oak paneled and had ornamental beamed ceilings. The ceiling design was inspired by the Louvain Library. The Council Chamber flooring was a noise absorbent composition material. The first and second floors remain virtually unchanged in design, ornamentation and usage with the exception of the Council Chamber walls. Acoustical blocks now cover the original paneling; blocks have also been placed between the ceiling beams.

C. Site:

Atlanta's City Hall, 68 Mitchell Street, is situated on a four acre city block bounded by Mitchell Street on the north, Central Avenue on the west, Washington Street on the east and Trinity Avenue on the south. The building is set back approximately 80 feet on the Mitchell Street side, on a central line between Washington Street and Central Avenue, with parking and truck access at the Trinity Avenue entrance. There are sloping lawns, walkways and shrubbery on two sides.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

#B24 and #833, Bureau of Buildings office (68 Mitchell Street)

B. Early Views:

Photographs from 1930 to the present are available at the Atlanta Historical Society. Various photographs, drawings of the building and its history are in the office of the Building Superintendent, City Hall.

C. Bibliography:

Lyon, Elizabeth M. "Business Buildings in Atlanta: 1865-1930: A Study in Urban Growth and Form". Ph. D. dissertation, Emory University, 1971.

Garrett, Franklin, Atlanta and Environs. 3 vols. New York, 1954.

Newspaper articles include:

Atlanta Journal Magazine, July 15, 1928. An interview with G. Lloyd Preacher by Medora Field Perkerson.

Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine, June 23, 1929.

Atlanta Journal, April 5, 1925. Proposal for City Hall by A. Ten Eyck Brown.

Atlanta Journal/Constitution, February 22, 1930. Describes moving into new City Hall.

Articles in "The City Builder": March 1928, p. 3; April 1929, p. 25; March 1930, p. 18.

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November 10, 1981